PROPOSED USE OF THE PLENARY POWERS TO SUPPRESS THE GENERIC NAME "ACINACEA" BORY DE ST. VINCENT, 1804, AND THE SPECIFIC NAME " NOTHA" BORY DE ST. VINCENT, 1804, AS PUBLISHED IN THE COMBINATION "ACINACEA NOTHA", FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING THE GENERIC NAME " GEMPYLUS " CUVIER, 1829, AND THE NAME " SERPENS " CUVIER, 1829, AS PUBLISHED IN THE COMBINATION " GEMPYLUS SERPENS ", THE OLDEST AVAILABLE NAMES FOR THE GENUS AND SPECIES CONCERNED (CLASS PISCES)

By **DENYS W. TUCKER,** B.Sc.
(*British Museum* (*Natural History*), *London*)

(Commission's reference : Z.N.(S.) 923)

The object of the present application is to ask the International Commission to use its Plenary Powers to suppress the generic name *Acinacea* Bory de St. Vincent, 1804 (*Voy. Iles Afrique* **1** : 93) and the specific name *notha* Bory de St. Vincent, 1804, as published on the same page in combination with the foregoing generic name, thereby making the generic name *Gempylus* Cuvier (G.L.C.F.D.), 1829 (*Règne Anim.* (ed. 2) **2** : 200) and the name *Gempylus serpens* Cuvier, 1829 (*loc. cit.* **2** : 200) the oldest available names for the genus and species concerned (Class Pisces, Order Percomorphi, family GEMPYLIDAE). Opportunity is taken to clarify the status of the name *Lemnisoma thyrsitoides* Lesson, 1831 (*Voy. Coquille*, Zool. 2 (No. 1) : 160), as regards which, however, no action is called for on the part of the Commission. A short history of the circumstances pertaining to the three names follows.

2. The name *Acinacea notha* Bory de St. Vincent is a borderline case so far as binominal nomenclature is concerned. The author introduces it under the name " l'acinacée bâtarde ", subsequently giving the Latinised form of the generic name thus : "Acinacée (*Acinacea*) ". He then proceeds to categorise it as follows :—

> *Acinacea* (notha) *pinnulis supra, infraque sextis* ; *dentibus quinque in mandibulo superiori* . . .

In the case of new species the author follows a similar practice throughout, giving the generic name in the usual way in italics and following it with the specific name in bracketed lower case letters. Linnean species are conventionally listed and it appears probable that the author comprehended, and in his own way applied, the principles of binominal nomenclature. The description is accompanied (Atlas : pl. IV, fig. 2) by a figure readily identifiable with the fish generally known as *Gempylus serpens* Cuvier.

3. The name *Acinacea* Bory de St. Vincent has never passed into general use. Agassiz (J.L.R.), 1846 (*Nomencl. zool. Index univ.* : 4) published the emendation *Acinaces* (a senior homonym of *Acinaces* Gerstaecker, 1858 (*Monogr. Endomych.* : 178) in the Coleoptera (Class Insecta)). Agassiz's emendation has also not been accepted. In 1940 (*Class. Fishes* : 483) however Berg gave the name ACINACEIDAE as an alternative to GEMPYLIDAE, and Whitley, in 1951 (*Rec. Austral. Mus.* **22** : 398), sought to revive the name *Acinacea* in place of *Gempylus* and to substitute the name ACINACEIDAE for GEMPYLIDAE. Whitley's recommendations have so far been ignored outside Australia.

4. The name *Lemnisoma thyrsitoides* Lesson, [1831], was published in a work which bears the date " 1830 " and for this reason it has usually been assumed that the name *Gempylus serpens* Cuvier, 1829, has priority. Fowler, 1905 (*Proc. Acad. nat. Sci. Philad.* **1904** : 767) however mistakenly attributed the publication date " 25 July 1827 " to Lesson's name *Lemnisoma* and consequently sought to supplant *Gempylus* with *Lemnisoma* (at the same time erecting the family and subfamily LEMNISOMIDAE and LEMNISOMINAE). It is evident that Fowler must have consulted Sherborn & Woodward, 1901 (*Ann. Mag. nat. Hist.* (7) **7** : 391) for the dates of issue of the *Livraisons* of the *Zoologie* Section of the *Voy. Coquille* and must accidentally have noted the date of the *Livraison* embracing page 160 of volume 1 instead of that of the same page of volume 2. In fact from a second paper by Sherborn & Woodward (1906, *Ann. Mag. nat. Hist.* (7) **17** : 336) it is apparent that the name *Lemnisoma* dates not from 1827 nor even from 1830, as the title-page of the volume suggests, but from 12th November 1831. This name is therefore a junior subjective synonym of *Gempylus* Cuvier, 1829. Similarly the name *thyrsitoides* Lesson, as published in the combination *Lemnisoma thyrsitoides*, is a junior subjective synonym of *Gempylus serpens* Cuvier, 1829. The only authors who have followed Fowler's lead appear to be Jordan & Evermann, 1905 (*Bull. U.S. Fish. Comm.* **23** : 179), except that the *Zoological Record* for 1905 adopted the family name LEMNISOMIDAE. This was done however for the sole purpose of recording Fowler's paper. Fowler himself subsequently reverted to the use of the name *Gempylus serpens* Cuvier (see Fowler, 1928, *Mem. B.P. Bishop Mus.* **10** : 135 ; *id.*, 1936, *Hongkong Nat.* **7** : 75 ; *id.*, *Bull. amer. Mus. nat. Hist.* **70** : 636).

5. The nominal species *Gempylus serpens* Cuvier, 1829, was founded on an illustration of *Serpens marinus compressus lividus* Sloane, 1707 (*Voy. Jamaica* : pl. 1, fig. 2). Cuvier & Valenciennes, 1831 (*Hist. nat. Poiss.* **8** : 211) erected a second nominal species *Gempylus coluber* on what appears to have been the holotype of *Lemnisoma thyrsitoides* Lesson. Posterity has decided unanimously that the name *G. coluber* Cuvier & Valenciennes is a junior subjective synonym of *G. serpens*.

6. At this point it is desirable to consider the position of the generic name *Lucoscombrus* Van der Hoeven, 1858 (*Handb. Zool.* 2 : 161), which as originally published contained two nominal species : *Gempylus serpens* Cuvier, 1829 ; *Gempylus coluber* Cuvier & Valenciennes, 1831. No type species was designated by Van der Hoeven and none has been selected by any subsequent author. As has already been explained, the foregoing specific names are regarded by all authors as being subjective synonyms of one another. From a practical point of view the genus *Lucoscombrus* Van der Hoeven is therefore monotypical. In order finally to dispose of this name I now select *Gempylus serpens* Cuvier to be the type species of this genus, which thus becomes objectively identical with *Gempylus* Cuvier, 1829. (The work in which the name *Lucoscombrus* was published appeared in two editions, the first with a Dutch title, the second with a German title. The first edition appeared in 1828 and the second in 1855. The foregoing generic name would have priority over *Gempylus* Cuvier if it had appeared in the first as well as in the second edition. In order to clear up this point, the copy of the rare First Edition in the Library of the British Museum at Bloomsbury has been consulted. This examination shows that at the point where, if at all, this name would have appeared, i.e. in the discussion of the *Scomber* (**2** : 237), Van der Hoeven treated *Gempylus* as a subgenus of *Scomber* and made no mention of the name *Lucoscombrus*. This latter name ranks for priority therefore only from the Second Edition of 1855.)

7. In addition, there is a generic name, *Zyphothyca* Swainson, 1839 (*Hist. nat. Fishes* **2** : 174), which is a junior subjective synonym of *Gempylus* Cuvier, 1828, through having *Gempylus coluber* Cuvier & Valenciennes as its type species by monotypy. Though not required taxonomically, *Zyphothyca* Swainson is a nomenclatorially available name and accordingly no action in regard to it is called for on the part of the Commission.

8. At first the genus *Gempylus* was placed either in the family TRICHIURIDAE or the family SCOMBRIDAE. Goode & Bean, 1895 (*Oceanic Ichth.* : 193) were the first authors to erect a family-group taxon for *Gempylus*, for which they founded the GEMPYLINAE as a subfamily of the SCOMBRIDAE. Regan, 1909 (*Ann. Mag. nat. Hist.* (8) **3** : 70) up-graded the GEMPYLINAE to full familial status as the GEMPYLIDAE.

9. It is thus apparent that *Gempylus* Cuvier has enjoyed almost universal acceptance since 1829, the subfamily GEMPYLINAE since 1895 and the family GEMPYLIDAE since 1909. It is desirable that this situation should be stabilised, the more so since the family GEMPYLIDAE includes fishes of considerable economic importance and with a growing literature.

10. I therefore ask the International Commission :—

(1) to use its Plenary Powers for suppressing the under-mentioned names for the purposes of the Law of Priority but not for those of the Law of Homonymy :—

  (a) the generic name *Acinacea* Bory de St. Vincent, 1804, and the emendation thereof *Acinaces* Agassiz (J.L.R.), 1846 ;

(b) the specific name *notha* Bory de St. Vincent, 1804, as published in the combination *Acinacea notha* ;

(2) to place the under-mentioned generic name on the *Official List of Generic Names in Zoology* :—*Gempylus* Cuvier (G.L.C.F.D.), 1829 (gender : masculine) (type species, by monotypy : *Gempylus serpens* Cuvier (G.L.C.F.D.), 1829) ;

(3) to place the under-mentioned specific name on the *Official List of Specific Names in Zoology* :—*serpens* Cuvier (G.L.C.F.D.), 1829, as published in the combination *Gempylus serpens* (specific name of type species of *Gempylus* Cuvier (G.L.C.F.D.), 1829) ;

(4) to place the under-mentioned generic names on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology* :—

(a) the generic names specified in (1)(a) above, as there suppressed under the Plenary Powers ;

(b) *Lucoscombrus* Van der Hoeven, 1858 (a junior objective synonym of *Gempylus* Cuvier, 1829) ;

(5) to place the under-mentioned specific name on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology* :—*notha* Bory de St. Vincent, 1804, as published in the combination *Acinacea notha*, and as suppressed under the Plenary Powers under (1)(a) above ;

(6) to place the under-mentioned family-group name on the *Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology* :—GEMPYLINAE Goode & Bean, 1895 (type genus : *Gempylus* Cuvier (G.L.C.F.D.), 1829) ;

(7) to place the under-mentioned family-group name on the *Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Family-Group Names in Zoology* :—ACINACEIDAE Berg, 1940 (type genus : *Acinacea* Bory de St. Vincent, 1804, a name suppressed under the Plenary Powers under (1)(a) above).